
**MASSACHUSETTS
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

2013

**Analysis of Child Fatalities
& Near Fatalities**

April 2015



Child Near Fatalities in 2013

The DCF Case Investigation Unit (CIU) receives notification of all reports of abuse or neglect that meet the definition of “near fatality.” DCF defines a “near fatality” as any case where a doctor or hospital has filed a 51A report and determined the child named in the report to be in “serious” or “critical” condition as a result of physical and/or sexual abuse or neglect, and that the condition is considered to be life threatening. Upon receiving notification of a near fatality from an area office, CIU staff review all information about the case contained in FamilyNet (DCF’s automated case management system). This preliminary data collection serves as the basis for their investigation. The CIU process for near fatalities is a paper review; there are no meetings with area office managers or staff. However, CIU investigators may call area office managers or staff for additional information.

There were 13 near fatalities reported to DCF during 2013 (7 boys and 6 girls). Abusive head trauma (AHT) injuries¹ were diagnosed in 8 of the 13 near fatalities. Six of the 8 abusive head trauma victims also had bodily injuries (fractures and bruises). Of the remaining 5 near fatalities: 2 had injuries from motor vehicle accidents (MVA); 2 had traumatic neck/throat injuries, bruising, and other bodily injuries; and 1 child (9 years old) had lacerations and lost part of his thumb defending himself from an attack. **(Table A1)**

Neglect was a factor in the near fatalities of 2 children, physical abuse was a factor for 1 child, and both physical abuse and neglect were factors for 10 children. These 13 children were victimized by 24 perpetrators. Perpetrators who neglected and physically abused children included 6 mothers, 4 fathers, and 2 boyfriends. The remaining perpetrators committed either neglect or physical abuse. They included 6 mothers and 1 father who neglected children and 2 fathers and 3 unknown perpetrators who physically abused children. **(Table A2)**

Victimized children included 7 (54%) infants (less than 1 year old), 1 one-year old, 2 two-year olds, 1 three-year old, 1 seven-year old, and 1 nine-year old **(Table A1)**. Six of the children were White and 1 was Multi-Racial. Race was unknown for 6 children. Four of the 13 children with near fatal injuries were identified as Hispanic/Latino.

Of the 13 families, 6 were known to DCF (3 open protective and 3 closed cases) and 7 were unknown (no prior history). None of the children were in DCF custody and none were in placement. Median ages of the mothers and fathers were 23 years and 27 years, respectively. Seven mothers and 4 fathers had a prior history with DCF. Current family issues were mental illness (9 families), domestic violence (3), and substance abuse (3). **(Tables A1 and A2)**

¹ Abusive head trauma is defined as brain, skull, and spinal injuries associated with shaking and other injuries inflicted on infants (new terminology from the American Academy of Pediatrics) (Christian, C.W. and R. Block. 2009. Abusive Head Trauma in Infants and Children. Pediatrics 123: 1409-1411).

Table A1. CY'2013 Child Near Fatalities: 13 Children from Families Known and Unknown to DCF

CHILD'S AGE	FAMILY CASE STATUS	DURATION OPENED/CLOSED	INJURIES	ABUSE/NEGLECT	DCF CUSTODY	PLACEMENT TYPE
48 days	no previous history	-----	abusive head trauma, fractures to shoulders	PHYS/NEG	No	N/A
73 days	no previous history	-----	abusive head trauma	PHYS/NEG	No	N/A
86 days	open protective	6 mos. or less	abusive head trauma, bruising (arms, face), seizures	PHYS/NEG	No	N/A
91 days	no previous history	-----	abusive head trauma, fractures (ribs, wrists)	PHYS/NEG	No	N/A
116 days	open protective	6 mos. or less	abusive head trauma	PHYS/NEG	No	N/A
127 days	open protective	6 mos. or less	abusive head trauma, rib fractures, liver injury, positive toxic screen (cocaine)	PHYS/NEG	No	N/A
152 days	no previous history	-----	abusive head trauma, fractures (ribs, clavicle, wrist)	PHYS/NEG	No	N/A
1 year	closed	6 mos. or less	fractures (arms, ribs, leg), ligature marks around neck, bruising to face	PHYS/NEG	No	N/A
2 years	no previous history	-----	abusive head trauma, rib fractures	PHYS/NEG	No	N/A
2 years	no previous history	-----	injuries from strangulation/choking, blunt force trauma, bruising	PHYS	No	N/A
3 years	closed	more than 6 mos.	injuries from MVA (unsupervised child hit by car)	NEG	No	N/A
7 years	closed	6 mos. or less	injuries from MVA (reckless endangerment of child)	NEG	No	N/A
9 years	no previous history	-----	partial amputation of thumb, lacerations, defensive wounds	PHYS/NEG	No	N/A

CODES: NEG = neglect; PHYS = physical abuse; N/A = not in placement

NOTE: **Abusive Head Trauma** = brain, skull, and spinal injuries associated with shaking and other head injuries inflicted on infants (American Academy of Pediatrics). Injuries may include: subdural hemorrhages; retinal hemorrhages; brain swelling; skull fractures ...

Table A2. CY'2013 Child Near Fatalities: Perpetrators (13 Children from Families Known or Unknown to DCF)

CHILD'S AGE	PERPETRATOR	NEGLECT	PHYSICAL ABUSE	INJURIES	CURRENT FAMILY ISSUES	TEENAGE MOTHER AT 1ST BIRTH																																																																																																														
48 days	mother	X	X	abusive head trauma, fractures to shoulders	MI																																																																																																															
	father	X	X				73 days	mother	X	----	abusive head trauma	MI		father	X	----	unknown	----	X	86 days	mother	X	----	abusive head trauma, bruising (arms, face), seizures	SA/MI		father	----	X	91 days	mother	X	----	abusive head trauma, fractures (ribs, wrists)			father	----	X	116 days	mother	X	X	abusive head trauma	MI	Yes	father	X	X	unknown	----	X	127 days	mother	X	X	abusive head trauma, rib fractures, liver injury, positive toxic screen (cocaine)	SA/DV/MI		father	X	X	152 days	mother	X	X	abusive head trauma, fractures (ribs, clavicle, wrist)		Yes	father	X	X	1 year	mother	X	----	fractures (arms, ribs, leg), ligature marks around neck, bruising to face	DV/MI		boyfriend	X	X	2 years	mother	X	X	abusive head trauma, rib fractures	SA/DV/MI		boyfriend	X	X	2 years	unknown	----	X	injuries from strangulation/choking, blunt force trauma, bruising			3 years	mother	X	----	injuries from MVA (unsupervised child hit by car)	MI	Yes	7 years	mother	X	----	injuries from MVA (reckless endangerment of child)		Yes	9 years	mother	X
73 days	mother	X	----	abusive head trauma	MI																																																																																																															
	father	X	----																																																																																																																	
	unknown	----	X																																																																																																																	
86 days	mother	X	----	abusive head trauma, bruising (arms, face), seizures	SA/MI																																																																																																															
	father	----	X																																																																																																																	
91 days	mother	X	----	abusive head trauma, fractures (ribs, wrists)																																																																																																																
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116 days	mother	X	X	abusive head trauma	MI	Yes																																																																																																														
	father	X	X																																																																																																																	
	unknown	----	X																																																																																																																	
127 days	mother	X	X	abusive head trauma, rib fractures, liver injury, positive toxic screen (cocaine)	SA/DV/MI																																																																																																															
	father	X	X																																																																																																																	
152 days	mother	X	X	abusive head trauma, fractures (ribs, clavicle, wrist)		Yes																																																																																																														
	father	X	X																																																																																																																	
1 year	mother	X	----	fractures (arms, ribs, leg), ligature marks around neck, bruising to face	DV/MI																																																																																																															
	boyfriend	X	X																																																																																																																	
2 years	mother	X	X	abusive head trauma, rib fractures	SA/DV/MI																																																																																																															
	boyfriend	X	X																																																																																																																	
2 years	unknown	----	X	injuries from strangulation/choking, blunt force trauma, bruising																																																																																																																
3 years	mother	X	----	injuries from MVA (unsupervised child hit by car)	MI	Yes																																																																																																														
7 years	mother	X	----	injuries from MVA (reckless endangerment of child)		Yes																																																																																																														
9 years	mother	X	X	partial amputation of thumb, lacerations, defensive wounds	MI																																																																																																															

CODES: DV = domestic violence; MI = mental illness; SA = substance abuse

NOTE: Omissions under "Current Family Issues" and "Teen Mother" indicate "None" or "Unknown." Issues apply to the children and their caretaker(s)

Abusive Head Trauma = brain, skull, and spinal injuries associated with shaking and other head injuries inflicted on infants (American

Academy of Pediatrics). Injuries may include: subdural hemorrhages; retinal hemorrhages; brain swelling; skull fractures...

Child Fatalities in 2013

Child Fatalities for Families Open or Recently Involved with DCF

All child deaths in families open or recently involved (“known”) to DCF are reported to the Case Investigation Unit, regardless of how the child died.² CIU staff conduct investigations that focus on a review of the services provided to the family and the circumstances surrounding the death. Each investigation includes, but is not limited to, a comprehensive review of the case record and a visit to the DCF Area Office to interview social work staff involved with the case. The purpose of this review is to determine if DCF needs to address any case practice or policy issues.

Since its formation in the late 1980s, the CIU has collected information on deceased children whose families had the following status with DCF:

- families with an open case;
- families being investigated as the result of a 51A report³ received prior to the child’s death⁴;
- families with cases that closed within the six months preceding the child’s death; and
- families who had a supported 51A report within six months preceding the child’s death, but the case was not opened for services.

Thirty-three (33) children in families with an open or recently⁵ closed DCF case status died in 2013. As determined by the medical examiner, 11 of these children died from natural causes, 4 from homicides, 2 from suicides, and 5 from accidents. Six (6) deceased children have undergone an autopsy but as of the writing of this report, the manner of death remains pending the completion of the forensic investigation. For an additional 5 children, the manner of death was “undetermined” following an autopsy by a medical examiner.⁶ Child maltreatment (neglect/physical abuse) was found by DCF to be the cause or contributing factor in 20 of the 33 deaths. **(Table A3)**

Fifty-four percent (54%) of these deceased children were infants (less than one-year old), 27% were 1-11 years old, and 18% were adolescents (12-17 years old). Three (3) of the 33 children were in DCF custody at the time of their death. Of the 3 children in DCF custody, 1 died from natural causes while placed in an unrelated foster home. The remaining 2 children in DCF custody were hospitalized infants who died from natural causes. **(Table A3)**

²Manner of death may be natural causes, unintentional injuries, homicide, suicide, pending investigation/autopsy, or undetermined following an autopsy.

³ Massachusetts Laws, Chapter 119, Section 51A (reporting of abuse and neglect of children).

⁴This 51A report under investigation must be independent of, and filed prior to, the 51A report filed on the child’s death or the factors directly contributing to the child’s death.

⁵Families with cases that closed within the six months preceding the child’s death

⁶The medical examiner has performed a full forensic evaluation (toxicology screens, investigation of the scene at death, autopsy, etc.) but cannot determine if the manner of death was due to natural causes or an accident.

Over the past 25 years, DCF child deaths (open or recently closed cases) have ranged from a high of 89 to a low of 30 fatalities per year, with a median of 41 fatalities. The number (33) of fatalities in 2013 was not appreciably different from the previous three years (30-39). In 2013, the most noticeable change from prior years was the large number of child maltreatment-related deaths (14 neglect, 1 physical abuse, 5 physical abuse and neglect). The 14 deaths involving neglect can be grouped as: 7 unsafe sleeping conditions, 4 drownings, 2 drug-related, and 1 “Other” (asthma attack). DCF determined that the sleeping conditions for 7 infants did not meet the standards set in the Massachusetts Department of Public Health’s Safe Sleep policy. **(Tables A3 and A5)**

Regardless of setting, most deaths have been due to natural causes and to a lesser degree accidents. In the past 13 years (2001-2013), there have been 2 maltreatment-related fatalities in foster care and none in residential care. There was an accidental death in 2001 when a child died while in unrelated foster care (neglect). In 2005, a child in unrelated foster care was a homicide victim (physical abuse and neglect).

Child Fatalities for Families with a Non-Current or No DCF History

In 2001, the CIU began collecting information on all deceased children for whom a 51A report was filed including those from families previously unknown to DCF and families with cases closed more than six months prior to the child’s death. This group of child fatalities is limited to those children where abuse/neglect was the direct cause of death or was a contributing factor to the cause of death. The data collected on these maltreatment deaths are not as comprehensive as the data collected on families with current or recent DCF involvement. Data are gathered via phone calls to area office staff and a review of case information in the DCF case management information system (FamilyNet).

The deaths of an additional 19 children reported to DCF were found to be maltreatment-related. Neglect was a factor in 15 deaths, physical abuse a factor in 2, and both physical abuse and neglect were factors in 2 deaths. Fourteen (14) children were from families not previously known to DCF and 5 were from families whose cases had been closed for more than six months at the time of death. For 7 of the 19 children, unsafe sleeping conditions were a factor in the death. **(Table A4)**

Unsafe Sleep

In 2013, there were 55 child fatalities from 33 families known to DCF and 22 families “unknown” to DCF. Of the 55 children, 14 were in a sleep environment that did not meet the standards recommended in the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) Safe Sleep Policy or as referred throughout this report as “unsafe sleep.” This includes 7 families known and 7 families “unknown” to DCF. The medical examiner was not able to determine the manner of death for 6 (43%) of these infant fatalities. Of the remaining fatalities of children in unsafe sleep settings, 2 were determined by the medical examiner to be accidental, 1 was due to natural causes, and 5 were pending the completion of an investigation by the police and medical examiners. DCF investigators supported neglect as a contributing factor for all 14 infants in unsafe sleep settings. (table below, Tables A3 and A4)

Year & Manner of Death	Cause of Death (Families Known and Unknown to DCF)			
	SIDS	SIDS/ Unsafe Sleep	Asphyxiation/ Unsafe Sleep	Ill-Defined & Unspecified Cause/ Unsafe Sleep
2007:				
Natural Causes	1	---	---	---
Accident	---	1 (1 neglect)	---	---
Undetermined/Pending	1	4 (3 neglect)	---	---
2008:				
Natural Causes	1	---	---	---
Accident	---	---	3 (2 neglect)	---
Undetermined/Pending	---	4 (1 neglect)	---	---
2009:				
Natural Causes	2	---	---	---
Accident	---	---	---	---
Undetermined/Pending	1	7 (3 neglect)	---	3 (1 neglect)
2010:				
Natural Causes	1	---	---	---
Accident	---	---	---	---
Undetermined	4 (1 neglect)	2 (1 neglect)	---	---
2011:				
Natural Causes	1	---	---	---
Accident	---	---	1 (1 neglect)	---
Undetermined	---	7 (5 neglect)	---	2 (2 neglect)
Pending Investigation	---	---	---	---
2012:				
Natural Causes	---	---	---	---
Accident	---	---	1 (1 neglect)	---
Undetermined	---	6 (4 neglect)	---	7 (4 neglect)
Pending Investigation	---	---	---	4 (1 neglect)
2013:				
Natural Causes	1	1 neglect	---	---
Accident	---	---	2 neglect	---
Undetermined	---	5 neglect	---	1 neglect
Pending Investigation	---	---	---	5 neglect

Note: (# neglect) = number of neglect-related deaths as ascertained by DCF investigators

Table A3. CY'2013 Child Fatalities: 33 Children from Families with an Open or Recently Open DCF Case Status

AGE (YEARS)	FAMILY CASE STATUS	DURATION OPENED/CLOSED	MANNER* OF DEATH	FACTORS CAUSING OR CONTRIBUTING TO DEATH	NEGLECT/ ABUSE	DCF CUSTODY	PLACEMENT TYPE
<1	open protective	6 months of less	NC	intraventricular hemorrhage (brain), prematurity, congenital condition		NO	N/A
<1	open protective	6 months of less	U	placental abruption (cocaine), complications from oxygen deprivation to brain	NEG	NO	N/A
<1	open protective	6 months of less	U	ill-defined and unspecified cause		NO	N/A
<1	open protective	6 months of less	P	ill-defined and unspecified cause (co-sleeping w/mother)	NEG	NO	N/A
<1	open protective	more than 6 months	P	ill-defined and unspecified cause (co-sleeping w/parents)	NEG	NO	N/A
<1	open protective	more than 6 months	P	unsafe sleep conditions	NEG	NO	N/A
<1	open protective	6 months of less	NC	extreme prematurity (marijuana and heroin), blood infection (sepsis)	NEG	TEMP	HOSP
<1	open protective	6 months of less	NC	congenital malformation of heart, prematurity		TEMP	HOSP
<1	open protective	6 months of less	H	multiple abusive injuries to head and neck	PHY	NO	N/A
<1	open protective	more than 6 months	P	ill-defined and unspecified cause (co-sleeping w/parents)	NEG	NO	N/A
<1	open protective	more than 6 months	H	multiple injuries to head and body (massive brain injury)	PHY/NEG	NO	N/A
<1	open protective	6 months of less	U	ill-defined and unspecified cause		NO	N/A
<1	case closed	6 months or less	U	SIDS (unsafe sleeping conditions)	NEG	NO	N/A
<1	open protective	6 months of less	NC	SIDS (co-sleeping w/parents)	NEG	NO	N/A
<1	open protective	6 months of less	H	AHT and multiple injuries to body	PHY/NEG	NO	N/A
<1	open protective	6 months of less	U	SIDS (co-sleeping w/parents, other unsafe sleeping conditions)	NEG	NO	N/A
<1	open protective	more than 6 months	NC	prematurity, congenital malformation of heart, influenza		NO	HOSP
<1	open protective	more than 6 months	NC	lymphocytic meningitis, prematurity		NO	N/A
1	open protective	6 months of less	NC	SIDS w/probable viral syndrome		NO	N/A
2	open protective	6 months of less	A	drowning (pool)	NEG	NO	N/A
2	open protective	6 months of less	P	ill-defined and unspecified cause	PHY/NEG	NO	N/A
3	case closed	6 months or less	A	drowning (pond)	NEG	NO	N/A
4	open protective	more than 6 months	H	homicide (body found following year)	PHY/NEG	NO	N/A
5	open protective	more than 6 months	NC	complications of candida tropicalis fungemia		PERM	UNREL
10	open protective	more than 6 months	A	drowning (pond)	NEG	NO	N/A
10	open protective	more than 6 months	P	traumatic injuries to intestines	PHY/NEG	NO	N/A
11	open CRA	6 months of less	NC	severe asthma attack (allergic reaction to dog)	NEG	NO	N/A
12	open protective	6 months of less	A	drowning (school pool)	NEG	NO	N/A
12	open protective	more than 6 months	NC	acute lymphoblastic leukemia		NO	N/A
15	case closed	6 months or less	S	asphyxiation (hanging)		NO	N/A
16	open protective	6 months of less	S	suffocated himself w/plastic bag		NO	N/A
17	case closed	6 months or less	A	head injury from MVA		NO	N/A
17	case closed	6 months or less	NC	sickle-cell anemia		NO	N/A

CODES: NC = natural causes; A = accident; H = homicide; S = suicide; P = pending investigation; U = undetermined by medical examiner; NEG = neglect; PHY = physical abuse;

CRA = Children Requiring Assistance; TEMP = temporary custody; PERM = permanent custody; AHT = abusive head trauma; MVA = motor vehicle accident;

N/A = not in placement; HOSP = hospital; KIN = kinship foster home; UNREL = unrelated foster home; ONRUN = on the run from placement

* Manner of death as determined by medical examiner

Table A4. CY'2013 Child Fatalities: 19 Children from Families Unknown to DCF or with Cases Closed more than Six Months**

AGE (YEARS)	FAMILY CASE STATUS	DURATION OPENED/CLOSED	MANNER* OF DEATH	FACTORS CAUSING OR CONTRIBUTING TO DEATH	NEGLECT/ ABUSE	DCF CUSTODY	PLACEMENT TYPE
<1	unknown family	-----	U	ill-defined and unspecified cause	NEG	NO	N/A
<1	case closed	more than 6 months	P	ill-defined and unspecified cause (co-sleeping w/parents)	NEG	NO	N/A
<1	unknown family	-----	U	SIDS (co-sleeping w/mother)	NEG	NO	N/A
<1	unknown family	-----	U	SIDS (co-sleeping w/father)	NEG	NO	N/A
<1	unknown family	-----	U	cerebrovascular disease (unsafe sleeping conditions)	NEG	NO	N/A
<1	unknown family	-----	U	SIDS (unsafe sleep conditions)	NEG	NO	N/A
<1	unknown family	-----	U	ill-defined and unspecified cause	NEG	NO	N/A
<1	unknown family	-----	A	asphyxiation (co-sleeping w/father, other unsafe sleep conditions)	NEG	NO	N/A
<1	unknown family	-----	H	inflicted injuries (AHT)	PHY/NEG	NO	N/A
<1	case closed	more than 6 months	A	suffocation (co-sleeping w/sibling and dog, unsafe bedding)	NEG	NO	N/A
1	unknown family	-----	H	inflicted injuries (AHT)	PHY	NO	N/A
1	unknown family	-----	P	ingested sleeping pills	NEG	NO	N/A
2	case closed	more than 6 months	A	asphyxiation in car seat	NEG	NO	N/A
3	case closed	more than 6 months	A	head injury from MVA	NEG	NO	N/A
3	unknown family	-----	A	head and neck injuries from MVA	NEG	NO	N/A
4	unknown family	-----	H	multiple injuries (abdomen, lower back, pelvis)	PHY/NEG	NO	N/A
6	case closed	more than 6 months	H	complications from oxygen deprivation to brain (includes seizure disorder) due to trauma (head/neck) inflicted as a baby	PHY	NO	N/A
7	unknown family	-----	A	drowning (pool)	NEG	NO	N/A
17	unknown family	-----	S	asphyxiation (hanging)	NEG	NO	RES

CODES: NC = natural causes; A = accident; H = homicide; S = suicide; P = pending investigation; U = undetermined by medical examiner; NEG = neglect; PHY = physical abuse;

AHT = abusive head trauma; MVA = motor vehicle accident; N/A = not in placement; RES = residential care

* Manner of death as determined by medical examiner

** Includes only fatalities involving neglect and/or physical abuse.

Analysis of DCF Child Fatalities: 1989 – 2013 (Open or Recently Closed Cases)

Thirty-three (33) children “known” to DCF died in 2013. Over the past 25 years, DCF child deaths (on open or recently closed cases) have ranged from a high of 89 to a low of 30 fatalities per year, with a median of 41 fatalities. (Table A5)

Table A5. Age of Children (1989 –2013): Counts of Children

Calendar Year	Age of Children						Total
	Less than 28 days	28 days to < 1 yr.	1 yr. to < 2 yrs.	2 yrs. to < 5 yrs.	5 yrs. to < 12 yrs.	12 yrs. or Older	
1989: No. %	16 19%	26 31%	5 6%	9 11%	10 12%	18 21%	84 100%
1990:	10 11%	30 34%	7 8%	12 13%	9 10%	21 24%	89 100%
1991:	8 12%	21 32%	4 6%	6 9%	9 14%	18 27%	66 100%
1992:	8 12%	23 34%	8 12%	8 12%	5 7%	15 22%	67 100%
1993:	10 15%	17 25%	11 16%	6 9%	6 9%	18 26%	68 100%
1994:	1 2%	25 38%	7 11%	9 14%	8 12%	15 23%	65 100%
1995:	8 15%	21 40%	6 11%	5 9%	10 19%	3 6%	53 100%
1996:	3 5%	14 25%	3 5%	6 11%	13 24%	16 29%	55 100%
1997:	6 14%	11 26%	3 7%	5 12%	2 5%	15 36%	42 100%
1998:	4 10%	5 12%	5 12%	6 15%	4 10%	17 41%	41 100%
1999:	6 15%	9 23%	1 3%	4 10%	4 10%	15 38%	39 100%
2000:	5 12%	6 15%	7 17%	3 7%	5 12%	15 37%	41 100%
2001:	3 7%	12 26%	1 2%	4 9%	8 17%	18 39%	46 100%
2002:	1 3%	9 28%	4 12%	8 25%	6 19%	4 12%	32 100%
2003:	3 8%	10 28%	4 11%	3 8%	5 14%	11 31%	36 100%
2004:	4 13%	6 20%	2 7%	4 13%	4 13%	10 33%	30 100%
2005:	5 16%	10 32%	1 3%	2 6%	4 13%	9 29%	31 100%
2006:	-- --	11 35%	2 6%	5 16%	4 13%	9 29%	31 100%
2007:	4 12%	13 38%	2 6%	2 6%	5 15%	8 24%	34 100%
2008:	6 16%	15 39%	1 3%	2 5%	2 5%	12 32%	38 100%
2009:	4 8%	13 26%	4 8%	5 10%	10 20%	14 28%	50 100%
2010:	6 20%	7 23%	3 10%	3 10%	2 7%	9 30%	30 100%
2011:	4 11%	11 30%	1 3%	2 5%	9 24%	10 27%	37 100%
2012:	5 13%	21 54%	2 5%	1 3%	2 5%	8 21%	39 100%
2013:	3 9%	15 45%	1 3%	4 12%	4 12%	6 18%	33 100%

Child Maltreatment-Related Fatalities: 2001 – 2013

The following data are limited to child fatalities where maltreatment was a direct cause of death or a contributing factor to the cause of death. While DCF has maintained data on maltreatment-related deaths since 1989, data collection was limited to children in families with an open or recently closed DCF case. Beginning in 2001, DCF began compiling data on maltreatment-related deaths of children whose families were unknown to DCF and children whose families had their DCF cases closed more than six months prior to the child's death. The following analysis includes maltreatment-related deaths for children in families known and "unknown" to the Department.

Of the 52 child fatalities in 2013 (33 for families known to DCF and 19 for families with non-current or no DCF history), there were 39 (75% of 52) child fatalities with supported allegations of neglect or physical abuse by a caretaker. **(Table A7)**

- Neglect was a factor in 29 deaths, physical abuse was factor in 3 deaths, and both neglect and physical abuse were factors in 7 deaths. **(Table A7)**
- Sixteen (16) of the deaths involved multiple perpetrators **(Table A6)**. Perpetrators of neglect included: 23 mothers, 14 fathers, 2 male partners, 1 stepfather, 1 day-care provider, 1 babysitter, 1 legal guardian, 1 grandmother, 1 uncle, 1 teacher, 1 residential-care staff, 1 other unrelated caretaker, and 2 unknown persons. Perpetrators of physical abuse were: 3 mothers, 1 father, 6 male partners, 1 nanny, and 2 unknown persons. **(Table A8)**
- Maltreatment-related deaths have ranged from 7 to 39 per year, with a median of 18 deaths from 2001-2013. **(Table A7)**
- Maltreatment-related deaths of children under age one year have ranged from 4 to 22 per year, with a median of 9 deaths from 2001-2013. **(Table A7)**
- Of the 39 victims of maltreatment, 37 were living at home/kin at the time of death, 1 was in a hospital, and 1 was in residential care. **(Table A7)**
- DCF case statuses of the 39 families:
 - 10 were open protective cases for 6 months or less
 - 7 were open protective case for more than 6 months
 - 1 was an open CRA (Children Requiring Assistance)
 - 2 were closed for 6 months or less
 - 5 were closed for more than 6 months
 - 14 families were unknown to DCF**(Table A7)**

Summary of 39 Maltreatment-Related Child Fatalities in 2013

29 Neglect-Related Deaths:

- 5 drownings (3 in pool, 2 in pond) (lack of supervision)
- 14 infants at risk due to unsafe sleeping conditions (6 possible SIDS)
- 2 medical complications due to prenatal drug exposure
- 2 MVA injuries (parent drivers: not using seat belts; operating under the influence)
- 1 severe asthma attack (parents made no arrangements for care, left 11-year-old child on his own; caretaker late response to child's breathing difficulties)
- 1 ingested sleeping pills (1-year-old child)
- 1 asphyxiation in car seat (2 year-old child)
- 1 suicide (infrequent monitoring/supervision)
- 2 ill-defined and unspecified cause (teen with dead newborn; lack of response to obtain emergency services)

3 Physical Abuse-Related Death:

- 3 abusive head trauma

7 Physical Abuse- and Neglect-related Death:

- 5 inflicted injuries to head and body
- 2 ill-defined and unspecified cause
(neglect from poor judgement in selecting caretaker, allowing physical abuse by other adult...)

TABLE A6. CY'2013 Child Fatalities: Perpetrators of Child Maltreatment (39 Children from Families Known or Unknown to DCF)

AGE OF CHILD	PERPETRATOR	NEGLECT	PHYSICAL ABUSE	FACTORS CAUSING OR CONTRIBUTING TO DEATH	CURRENT* FAMILY ISSUES	MANNER** OF DEATH	TEEN MOTHER AT 1ST BIRTH
<1 day	mother	x		ill-defined and unspecified cause	-----	U	UNKNOWN
7 days	mother	x		placental abruption (cocaine), complications from oxygen deprivation to brain	SA/MI	U	NO
21 days	mother	x		ill-defined and unspecified cause (co-sleeping w/parents)	SA	P	UNKNOWN
	father	x					
33 days	mother	x		ill-defined and unspecified cause (co-sleeping w/mother)	SA/MI	P	YES
37 days	mother	x		ill-defined and unspecified cause (co-sleeping w/parents)	SA/DV/MI	P	NO
	father	x					
54 days	unknown	x		unsafe sleep conditions	SA/DV/MI	P	YES
55 days	mother	x		SIDS (co-sleeping w/mother)	SA	U	UNKNOWN
56 days	mother	x		extreme prematurity (marijuana and heroin), blood infection (sepsis)	SA/DV	NC	NO
	father	x					
66 days	father	x		SIDS (co-sleeping w/father)	SA/DV	U	UNKNOWN
68 days	father		x	multiple abusive injuries to head and neck	SA/DV/MI	H	YES
79 days	mother	x		ill-defined and unspecified cause (co-sleeping w/parents)	MI	P	YES
	father	x					
89 days	mother	x		multiple injuries to head and body (massive brain injury)	SA/MI	H	NO
	male partner		x				
116 days	father	x		cerebrovascular disease (unsafe sleeping conditions)	DV	U	NO
116 days	mother	x		SIDS (unsafe sleeping conditions)	SA/DV/MI	U	NO
	father	x					
131 days	mother	x		SIDS (co-sleeping w/parents)	SA/MI	NC	NO
	father	x					
143 days	day-care provider	x		SIDS (unsafe sleep conditions)	-----	U	UNKNOWN
148 days	babysitter	x		ill-defined and unspecified cause	-----	U	UNKNOWN
164 days	mother	x	x	AHT and multiple injuries to body	SA/DV/MI	H	YES
	male partner		x				
198 days	mother	x		SIDS (co-sleeping w/parents, other unsafe sleeping conditions)	SA	U	UNKNOWN
	father	x					
257 days	father	x		asphyxiation (co-sleeping w/father, other unsafe sleep conditions)	-----	A	UNKNOWN
273 days	mother	x		inflicted injuries (AHT)	DV	H	UNKNOWN
	male partner		x				
317 days	father	x		suffocation (co-sleeping w/sibling and dog, unsafe bedding)	SA	A	UNKNOWN
1 year	nanny		x	inflicted injuries (AHT)	-----	H	NO
1 year	mother	x		ingested sleeping pills	-----	P	UNKNOWN
2 years	mother	x		Drowning (pool)	SA/DV	A	NO
2 years	uncle	x		asphyxiation in car seat	-----	A	UNKNOWN

TABLE A6. CY'2013 Child Fatalities: Perpetrators of Child Maltreatment (40 Children from Families Known or Unknown to DCF) (CONTINUED)

AGE OF CHILD	PERPETRATOR	NEGLECT	PHYSICAL ABUSE	FACTORS CAUSING OR CONTRIBUTING TO DEATH	CURRENT* FAMILY ISSUES	MANNER** OF DEATH	TEEN MOTHER AT 1ST BIRTH
2 years	unknown	x	x	ill-defined and unspecified cause	DV	P	YES
3 years	legal guardian	x		Drowning (pond)	MI	A	UNKNOWN
	grandmother	x					
3 years	father	x		head injury from MVA	SA	A	UNKNOWN
3 years	mother	x		head and neck injuries from MVA	-----	A	UNKNOWN
4 years	mother	x		multiple injuries (abdomen, lower back, pelvis)	-----	H	UNKNOWN
	male partner		x				
4 years	mother	x	x	homicide (body found following year)	SA/DV/MI	H	YES
	male partner	x	x				
6 years	unknown		x	complications from oxygen deprivation to brain (includes seizure disorder) due to trauma (head/neck) inflicted as a baby	-----	H	UNKNOWN
7 years	mother	x		drowning (pool)	-----	A	UNKNOWN
10 years	mother	x		drowning (pond)	DV	A	UNKNOWN
	father	x					
10 years	mother	x	x	traumatic injuries to intestines	SA/MI	P	YES
	male partner	x	x				
	stepfather	x					
11 years	mother	x		severe asthma attack (allergic reaction to dog)	-----	NC	NO
	father	x					
	other caretaker	x					
12 years	gym teacher	x		drowning (school pool)	-----	A	YES
17 years	residential staff	x		asphyxiation (hanging)	SA/MI	S	UNKNOWN

CODES: NC = natural causes; A = accident; H = homicide; S = suicide; P = pending investigation; U = undetermined by medical examiner; SA = substance abuse; DV = domestic violence;

MI = mental illness

* Applies to child's caretaker (mother, father, other) and child

** Manner of death as determined by medical examiner

Table A7. Profile of Child Neglect/Physical Abuse Deaths

	Calendar Year													Total
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	
2001-2013	19	17	16	8	7	10	19	18	15	18	23	20	39	229
Total Child Maltreatment Fatalities	19	17	16	8	7	10	19	18	15	18	23	20	39	229
Family Case Status:														
current protective case open 6 months or less	3	--	1	1	2	1	4	5	2	3	3	5	10	40
current protective case open more than 6 months	3	7	4	1	--	2	6	3	4	3	4	1	7	45
current CRA case *	--	--	--	--	--	--	3	--	--	--	--	--	1	4
current voluntary open more than 6 months	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	--	--	--	--	1
case closed 6 months or less	1	2	--	1	2	--	--	3	--	2	3	1	2	17
case closed more than 6 months	3	2	4	2	1	3	1	2	2	5	3	6	5	39
unknown to DCF	9	6	7	3	2	4	5	5	6	5	10	7	14	83
Maltreatment:														
neglect	11	12	10	6	5	8	13	15	9	10	18	18	29	164
physical abuse	3	4	1	2	1	1	3	1	3	2	2	1	3	27
neglect and physical abuse	5	1	5	--	1	1	3	2	3	6	3	1	7	38
Gender:														
male	10	11	9	7	6	7	7	8	9	11	11	14	19	129
female	9	6	7	1	1	3	12	10	6	7	12	6	20	100
Age (years):														
less than 1	11	9	6	6	4	5	11	10	7	8	11	18	22	128
1 - 5	6	6	6	--	2	3	3	4	3	9	8	1	10	61
6 - 11	2	2	2	--	1	1	5	1	3	--	3	1	5	26
12 - 17	--	--	2	2	--	1	--	3	2	1	1	--	2	14
Race:														
White	3	3	12	2	2	4	6	8	5	6	8	8	19	86
Black	2	2	--	--	2	2	4	2	4	4	5	1	5	33
Asian	--	--	1	--	--	--	--	1	2	--	1	--	1	6
multi-racial	1	7	1	1	--	1	2	1	1	4	1	2	2	24
unknown	13	5	2	5	3	3	7	6	3	4	8	9	12	80
Hispanic Origin:														
yes	1	4	3	3	--	3	6	4	4	3	7	9	9	56
no	6	5	11	2	4	7	9	11	11	12	5	10	21	114
unknown	12	8	2	3	3	--	4	3	--	3	11	1	9	59
Placement Status:														
not in placement	16	14	16	7	5	9	19	14	15	17	23	18	37	210
unrelated foster home	1	--	--	--	1	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	2
residential care	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	1
institution (hospital/nursing home)	2	3	--	1	1	1	--	4	--	1	--	2	1	16
Manner of Death:														
natural causes **	4	3	3	4	1	2	--	5	--	1	1	--	3	27
accident	6	7	7	2	3	4	8	8	4	6	8	5	10	78
suicide	--	--	1	--	1	--	--	--	1	--	1	--	1	5
homicide	8	5	5	2	2	3	7	3	6	8	4	3	8	64
undetermined/pending ***	1	2	--	--	--	1	4	2	4	3	9	12	17	55

* CRA = Children Requiring Assistance

** Premature babies dying from congenital conditions (neglect) or placental abruption (physical abuse) due to their mothers' use of substances during pregnancy.

*** Manner of death could not be determined following an autopsy by a medical examiner (or pending completion of an investigation).

Table A8. Perpetrators of Child Neglect/Physical Abuse		Calendar Year													Total
		2001-2013	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	
Perpetrator: * (Neglect)	mother	10	11	13	4	5	6	15	13	9	13	16	16	23	156
	father	2	3	6	2	1	2	3	4	7	6	4	12	14	66
	stepfather	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	--	--	--	1	2
	mother's boyfriend	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	1	--	1	1	--	2	6
	father's girlfriend	1	1	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	--	--	--	--	3
	grandmother	--	1	2	--	1	1	--	1	2	--	1	--	1	10
	grandfather	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	--	--	--	--	1
	aunt	--	--	2	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	3
	uncle	1	--	1	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	1	1	5
	female legal guardian	--	1	--	--	--	--	--	1	--	--	--	--	--	3
	foster parent	1	--	--	--	1	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	2
	day-care provider	--	--	1	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	2
	provider (after school program)	1	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	1
	babysitter	--	--	1	--	--	--	--	2	--	1	--	--	1	5
	gym teacher	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	1
	other unrelated adult caretaker	--	--	--	1	--	2	--	--	--	--	2	--	1	6
	nursing home/rehab staff	--	--	--	--	--	1	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	1
	residential care staff	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	1
unknown	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	2	2	
Perpetrator: * (Physical Abuse)	mother	1	3	2	1	1	--	2	1	2	4	4	--	3	24
	father	4	1	1	1	--	--	1	--	4	3	--	1	1	17
	mother's boyfriend	1	1	2	--	--	--	3	--	1	1	2	--	6	17
	father's girlfriend	1	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	1
	uncle	1	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	--	2
	foster parent	--	--	--	--	1	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	1
	babysitter	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	--	--	--	1
	nanny	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	1
	other unrelated adult caretaker	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	--	--	1
	non-caretaker **	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	2	--	--	--	--	--	2
	unknown	1	--	1	--	--	2	--	--	--	1	--	--	2	7

* Perpetrators who neglect and physically abuse a child are counted under each category. If more than one perpetrator victimized a child, each perpetrator is counted under the appropriate category(ies).

** Non-caretaker was the mother's former female partner (2 siblings died in arson fire).